



**Just as you shop for other products and services,  
residential customers of Illinois  
investor-owned electric utilities are eligible to  
choose an electric supplier, effective May 2002.**

## THE RESTRUCTURING PROCESS

There are three steps to receiving electricity: *generation* (production of electricity), *transmission* (sending high voltage power to distribution points), and *distribution* (delivering power to your home). When the utility handles all three of these steps, it is called *bundled service*.

Beginning in May 2002, residential customers are eligible to choose their electric *generation* supplier. The supplier must have a way to get the electricity to you. Your current electric utility is required to provide *delivery services* and will continue to maintain the wires and deliver electric service to you in a reliable manner. However, you do not have to make a change. Unless you choose differently, your current electric utility will continue to handle generation, transmission, and distribution (bundled service).

It may be a while before other electric suppliers pursue you as a customer. You should take the time now to learn about electric choice so you can make an informed decision when suppliers are active in your area. Then you will be ready to choose a supplier based on your own needs and preferences. Those considerations may include how or where the electricity is produced, economic or environmental benefits, the lowest price, total cost, or the best combination of prices, services and incentives.



## SERVICE RELIABILITY

When storms or other circumstances cause an outage, you will call the same company you've always called – your local electric utility. This is true whether you are a bundled service or delivery service customer.

Your current electric utility company remains responsible for delivering electricity and must provide reliable delivery service even if you choose a new supplier. Your current electric utility company cannot discriminate based on who supplies your generation.

## PURCHASING YOUR ELECTRICITY

### *Know Your Options*

- You can remain with your current utility as a bundled customer. That is, your current utility will handle the generation, transmission, and distribution of your electricity.
- You can elect to become a delivery services customer. As a delivery services customer, you may choose another Illinois electric utility or an Alternative Retail Electric Supplier (ARES).

### *Who May Be Marketing Electricity?*

- Alternative Retail Electric Suppliers (ARES), who may offer a variety of services
- Illinois electric utilities, selling outside their service areas
- Aggregators, or group buyers, may offer a way to buy electricity in bulk to increase customers' buying power

### *Changing Suppliers*

After you sign an agreement with another supplier, that new supplier will notify your current electric utility. Your utility will send you a confirmation notice of the switch.

Illinois law provides for a phase-in of customer choice.

Customers of Illinois investor-owned electric utilities benefit from a rate freeze that is in effect through January 1, 2007. The law also provides for rate reductions for residential customers to bring their rates in line with the Midwest average.

## YOUR ELECTRICITY BILL

If you choose to become a delivery services customer, expect changes in how you are billed. You may receive one bill from the new supplier, or you may receive separate bills – one from the electric supplier and one from your utility company that delivers the electricity to your home.

The charges on an electric bill could include:

- *Generation charge* for producing electricity
- *Transmission charge* for transporting electricity from the generation source to the local utility
- *Delivery service charge* for service provided by the electric utility to keep the transmission and distribution systems functioning so customers can receive electric service
- *Transition charge* for costs incurred by the local utility prior to restructuring, which may be charged through the transition charge period (through December 2006)
- *Customer charge*, which is a basic service charge to partially cover the costs of billing, meter reading, equipment, and service line maintenance

## SAFEGUARDING YOUR SERVICE

Safeguards have been built into the new system to protect customers. The ICC must review and approve any charges, terms, and conditions for delivery services.

- Electric suppliers must obtain written authorization, account numbers, and meter numbers from customers before switching their service from another supplier.
- Marketing materials that disclose the prices, terms, and conditions of the products or services offered or sold to the customer must be accurate.
- ARES must be certified by the ICC. Lists of suppliers are available from the utility and ICC. See the ICC website **[www.icc.state.il.us/pluginillinois](http://www.icc.state.il.us/pluginillinois)**.
- The ICC will publish names of companies that fail to provide service in accordance with the terms of their contracts.
- If an electric supplier or local utility fails to provide promised service, the law permits you to file a complaint with the ICC and/or the Illinois Attorney General.
- Illinois Commerce Commission (800) 524-0795 and/or the Illinois Attorney General (800) 386-5438 in Chicago or (800) 243-0618 in Springfield.

## YOUR RIGHTS AS A CUSTOMER

The law ensures your rights as a customer throughout the restructuring process.

- **Unauthorized switching of suppliers.** The law prohibits switching customers without written authorization.
- **Terms of service.** Before beginning to provide service, a supplier must provide a statement detailing charges, length of the contract, process for notification regarding changes in terms of service, and a toll-free number to call.
- **Access to billing data.** Customers or authorized agents are entitled to obtain their billing and usage data from their current electric utility upon request but may be required to pay a reasonable fee.
- **Customer service call center.** All electric utilities and alternative suppliers are required to provide a customer service call center where consumers can reach a representative and receive current information.

## GET THE CONNECTION

For a list of certified suppliers and to learn more about your rights, risks, and responsibilities visit the Illinois Commerce Commission's web site at **[www.icc.state.il.us/pluginillinois](http://www.icc.state.il.us/pluginillinois)** or write to us.



Illinois Commerce Commission  
527 East Capitol Avenue  
Springfield, Illinois 62701

To order a free brochure, call the  
Illinois Commerce Commission toll-free at  
(877) 758-4464  
(800) 858-9277 (TTY)

Electric co-ops and municipal systems may elect to enter the competitive marketplace to offer their customers choice, but they are not required to participate.

